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Dr. Robert Bracket
Director, Center for Food Safety and Nutrition
Food and Drug Administration
5100 Paint Branch Parkway
College Park, MD 20740

Dear Dr. Bracket

I am writing in support of a petition to create a new claim of "lean" for "Meals Not Measurable by a Cup" (MNMC). This claim will, in my estimation, benefit consumers by helping them to select healthier choices in this popular category. "Lean" is a term consumers recognize as lower in fat; therefore, its acknowledgement by FDA would support public health efforts in nutrition education.

The category includes some of the most popular choices of foods, according to the USDA's Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals (CSFII) such as hamburgers, pizza and burritos. As many of these foods are higher in fat, an easily identifiable term such as 'lean', which denotes foods lower in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol will guide consumers to better choices. The "lean" claim will indicate foods that have less than half the fat of these popular foods. Many consumers like not only the convenience and nutritional value of portable meals, but also the portion control it provides them. As a pediatrician, I recognize the value of teaching young people and their parents how to read labels. Furthermore, simple terms that support the dietary guidance of major health professional organizations such as the American Heart Association, the American Dietetic Association as well as the Institute of Medicine's Food and Nutrition Board provide an effective means to educate patients and consumers.

The NLEA went a long way in providing nutrition information to consumers. However, this category of food has grown substantially since NLEA was implemented. Analysis of CSFII data shows that people who select lower fat foods tend to have a healthier diet overall. Therefore, the Lean claim for MNMC could enable the public to consume a healthier diet.

Thank you for consideration of this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Christine L. Williams, MD, MPH

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